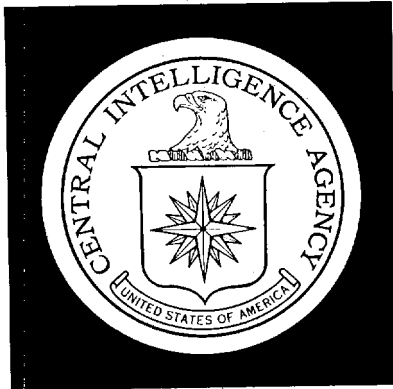


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ARMS CONTROL: The Soviet proposal for a five-power nuclear disarmament conference is meeting with a cool reception among non-nuclear powers.

Representatives of non-nuclear states at the current session of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) in Geneva have expressed doubt that the five-power talks will ever take place. They have cautioned that nuclear disarmament should not become the exclusive concern of members of the "nuclear club." They claim to be worried that in such a case other countries might then have an additional incentive to acquire nuclear weapons to gain entrance to the club.

The Japanese, West Germans, Italians, and Egyptians have all noted that such a conference could seriously detract from the work of the CCD. A number of countries have also stressed that the question of a comprehensive nuclear test ban should remain in the CCD's bailiwick.

Of the five prospective conferees, the British, skeptical from the beginning, say that there are no particularly promising topics to talk about in such a forum. The French are standing on their early favorable reaction, but along with everyone else, Paris anticipates a negative response from Peking. The Soviets have begun proselyting among the non-nuclear powers, such as Canada, India, and Japan. Chou En-lai commented negatively on Moscow's proposal in June. Subsequently he has remarked that Peking believes that non-nuclear nations favor a Chinese proposal--originally advanced in mid-1963--for a meeting of all heads of state to agree on the abolition and destruction of nuclear weapons.

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